



## Modoc, 1959

ATA / WMEC-194; ATR-121  
(ex-*Bagaduce*)  
Call Sign: N I J B

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A small tribe of Lutuanian Indians from northeastern California, who, following a long series of wars with the whites, who were divided and forced to live on either the Klamath Reservation, Oregon, or the Quapaw in Oklahoma.

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Builder: Levingston Shipbuilding Company, Orange, Texas

Length: 143'

Beam: 33' 10"

Draft: 13' 3"

Displacement: 754 tons

Cost: N/A

Commissioned: 15 February 1944 (USN); 20 April 1959 (USCG)

Decommissioned: 31 May 1979

Disposition: Sold

Machinery: 2 electric motors driven by 2 generators driven by 2 General Motors diesels; 1,500 BHP; single propeller

Performance & Endurance:

Max: 12.0 knots

Cruising: 8.5 knots; 12,000 mile range

Complement: 47

Armament: 1 x 20mm/80

Electronics: SPS-23 radar (1969)

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## History:

The *Modoc* was originally laid down at the Levingston Shipbuilding Company of Orange, Texas, as the *Sotoyomo*-class auxiliary fleet tug *ATR-121*. She was reclassified as an auxiliary fleet tug with the designation and hull number *ATA-194* on 15 May 1943. She was launched on 4 December 1943 and was commissioned as USS *ATA-194* on 15 February 1944. She then began service with the Navy in the Pacific in the waters around Guam during World War II. She was transferred to the Military Sea Transport Service (MSTS) as USNS *T-ATA-194* in 1946, where she was still "owned" by the Navy but sailed with a civilian crew. She was given the name USS *Bagaduce* (*T-ATA-194*) on 16 December 1948. While based out of Kodiak, Alaska, she was dispatched to tow the disabled CGC *Storis* back to port. *Bagaduce* was decommissioned and placed out of service sometime in 1952. She was tied up with the Reserve Fleet in Olympia, Washington.

She was transferred to the Coast Guard and was commissioned under the command of LT Clarence J. Pare, Jr., as USCGC *Modoc* on 20 April 1959. She then reported to her home port of Coos Bay, where she replaced the aging 125-foot cutter *Bonham*. *Bonham*'s crew had cross-decked to *Modoc* and a rumor from the time was that her commissioning had been ordered so quickly that there had not been sufficient time to paint over her entire Navy gray hull and only the shore-side of *Modoc* was painted white. She was designated as *WATA-194*. From 1959 to 1969 she was stationed at Coos Bay, Oregon where she was used for coastal and off-shore search and rescue, oceanography, and law enforcement duties, primarily fisheries enforcement. Her normal area of operations extended from the California-Oregon border to Canada and she was also occasionally called upon to patrol the Gulf of Alaska. When not underway, *Modoc* was on continual alert and was capable of getting underway within two hours to proceed to a vessel in distress. A unit history written by an anonymous crewman sometime in the mid-1970s noted:

"Designed and built from the keel up along the lines of a classic European oceangoing tug, the MODOC will literally tow anything afloat. She is fully equipped to carry out major coastal and long-range search and rescue operations, one of her two major mission areas. MODOC's other prime mission is law enforcement. This cutter, along with other west coast cutters, patrols the waters off Oregon, Washington, and California, locating and identifying foreign fishing vessels. In addition, the operations and catch of these vessels are monitored and the vessels frequently boarded. Foreign vessels found in violation

of our national fisheries laws within 12 miles would be brought into port and prosecuted in federal court. As you read this, the MODOC is on fisheries patrol performing this duty."

Her boom and heavy towing gear was removed in August 1963. Also during that month her crew assisted in a special guard detail at Tongue Point, Oregon, during a visit by President John F. Kennedy at the dedication of the first Job-Corps center on the west coast. In January 1965 she assisted the Canadian tug *La Force*, for which the owner's of *La Force*, the Vancouver Tug Boat Company, presented the cutter with a silver tea service. On 20 September 1967 she escorted the disabled Danish M/V *Marieskou* following a collision with the *Chitose Maru* four miles north of Cape Flattery. *Modoc* was reclassified as WMEC-194 in 1968. She and her sister *Comanche* were the smallest cutters designated as WMEC. On 17 March 1968 she assisted the USS *Chowanoc* recover her tow of *DE-373* 25 miles west of Coos Bay. On 30 April 1968 she assisted following collision between the Japanese M/V *Suwaharu* and the Liberian M/V *Mandoil II* off Oregon. On 1 August 1968 she rescued the lone survivor from the F/V *Rodoma*.

From 1970 until 1976 she was stationed at Coos Bay, Oregon. A patrol summary dated 17 October 1970 gives some insight into her routine patrols: "The U.S. Coast Guard Cutter MODOC (WMEC-194) with it's crew of 5 officers and 34 enlisted personnel returned to port today after completing Law Enforcement Patrol duties off the coast of Oregon and Washington. The ship was underway for 120 hours and traveled 955 miles . . . Thirty-six different Soviet vessels were detected operating between 14 and 20 miles off shore from Cape Araago to Grays Harbor . . . No violations of the contiguous fishing zone or territorial waters were detected."

On 3 June 1972 an off-duty *Modoc* crewman, SA James Carignan, of Olympia, Washington, drowned while attempting to save a 12-year-old girl who had been swept away from a beach by the surf. He was posthumously awarded the Coast Guard Medal. In January of 1974 *Modoc* braved 100-knot winds to assist the stricken tug *Sea Racer* and her tow, the former liberty ship *Arlington*. In November 10 1974 she retrieved the 40-foot high special environmental data buoy EBO-2 from the Cobb Sea Mount. On 15 May 1975 she seized the Polish 278-foot fish factory trawler *Kalmar* 10 miles off Monterey, California, for fishing inside the 12-mile limit and escorted her to San Francisco. A news release about the incident noted:

"The Polish fishing vessel KALMAR, seized by the Coast Guard 10 miles off the Monterey coast early this morning was cited for fishing inside the 12-mile limit. Homeported in Swinouj'scie, Poland, the vessel carries a crew of approximately 70 men. The KALMAR fished off the West Coast during the 1974 foreign fishing season. It was first observed fishing off California in 1975 off Half Moon Bay on January 14 by a Coast Guard Air Station aircraft patrol from San Francisco. In

March 1975 she was observed conducting fishing operations in the vicinity of Coos Bay, Oregon. During April and May of this year Coast Guard patrols observed the KALMAR fishing off Point Reyes, Half Moon Bay and Santa Cruz."

In August of 1975 *Modoc* safely towed the disabled East German stern-trawling factory-ship *Rudolph Leonhard* to Coos Bay. In November of that year, during a severe gale, she attempted to locate the hulk of the Korean fishing vessel *Kwang Myong No. 96* that had been abandoned by her crew after a fire. The *Modoc* was unable to locate the hulk and turned back after heavy seas caused 45-degree rolls that led to injuries among some of the crew and caused structural damage.

*Modoc* transferred back to Coos Bay in 1977 where she remained for the remainder of her Coast Guard career. In August 1978 she towed the disabled 48-foot Canadian sailboat *Naganek* to Astoria after her operator reported that his engine had failed and that his wife had been killed attempting to enter the engine room. The Coast Guard later ruled her death to be an accident. *Modoc* departed on 28 October 1978 to undergo a renovation and refurbishment period at the Lake Union drydocks near Seattle. While returning to her home port on 18 December 1978 *Modoc* narrowly avoided a collision with the loaded 810-foot tanker *Arco Sag River* at the mouth of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

*Modoc* was decommissioned on 31 May 1979 at Coast Guard Base Seattle and was placed on "Inactive, Out of Commission, In Reserve" status. Her final commanding officer was LCDR C. G. Boyer, USCG. Her crew cross-decked to her replacement, the 180-foot tender *Citrus*. *Modoc* was later sold. As of 2004, she had been renamed *Modoc Pearl* and was being used as a bed and breakfast inn at Gig Harbor, Washington.

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#### **Awards:**

Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation  
Coast Guard Battle Efficiency "E" Ribbon  
World War II Victory Ribbon  
American Campaign Ribbon  
Asian-Pacific Campaign Ribbon  
Navy Occupation Ribbon  
National Defense Service Ribbon

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**Nicknames:** "Mud Duck"; "Mighty Mud Duck"; "Ghost of the Oregon Coast"; "Muduc"



USCGC *Modoc*; no caption/date/photo number; photographer unknown

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**Sources:**

Cutter History File. USCG Historian's Office, USCG HQ, Washington, D.C.

*Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*. Washington, DC: USGPO.

Robert Scheina. *U.S. Coast Guard Cutters & Craft, 1946-1990*. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1990.

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